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JUNE 19 1981

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LITERATURE

S. T. JOSHI (Editor):
H. P. Lovecraft: Four Decades of Criticism
247pp. Ohio University Press. £9.
0 8214 0442 3

"The only real horror in these fictions is the horror of bad taste and bad art." Edmund Wilson's memorable attack on Lovecraft's fantasy tales, which for all their occasional over-writing and adjectival insistence exert on many of us a fascination akin to that felt by their hapless protagonists in the face of terrifying secrets, cries out for a vigorous defence which S. T. Joshi, at first sight, does not seem well-equipped to conduct. Joshi's literary judgment allows him to see in Winfield Townley Scott a "major American poet"; and his uncertain feeling for the English language shows up on page after page in such constructions as "he could keenly appreciate" or "he stived to harmonise himself" or "Like Poe, Lovecraft's position in the history of science-fiction is important", as well as in clumsy formulations like "... we find several complementary patterns relating to this basic one of the cosmic quality" or "the most revolutionary and significant contribution has been done in the following article". Add to this some eccentric spellings with which the book is peppered - "dare" for "fair", for instance, or "development" (constantly) could this be Ohio University Press house-style? or "de-Maceable" - and you become weary of reading such assurances as "Lovecraft was exceedingly careful about the smallest nuances of spelling, punctuation, and grammar" or "We encounter in Lovecraft's writing a soberly erudite and precise style ... Lovecraft searched for the most just and assiduously as did Flaubert". Can someone who writes such shaky English really be trusted to judge "nuance" and "precision" in the achieved work, rather than the endeavours and pretensions, of others?

Not does the compilation under review examine all significant aspects of the body of work with which it deals. Lovecraft earned his living, appropriately, as a "ghost" writer of the writings of others; yet though many of these revisions have been published, there is no appreciation of them here. He reverts frequently to a wide variety of pictorial motifs, from the backgrounds of Leonardo's paintings to Sidney Sime's fantastic illustrations; yet here we find no essay on his relation to the pictorial arts, or on the illustrators, from Frank Spelton onwards, who have had such a powerful (and sometimes disastrous) effect on the way in which his work has been received. The bulk of his writing has come down to us in the form of thousands of letters to various correspondents; but here we look in vain for any appreciation of his epistolary modes and styles. He was prominent in the "amateur journalist" movement, and wrote a great deal for his own amateur journal - but Joshi's team offers us no survey or appreciation of this aspect of his early work. There were, inevitably, some film-versions of *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, *The Dunwich Horror* and *The Colour Out of Space*; but no one in this symposium has found it necessary to analyse what happens when Lovecraft's imaginings are transformed by the visual language of the cinema.

Despite these deficiencies, however, and despite a measure of probability and clumsiness in the construction of some of the critics here brought together, Joshi's collection of essays turns out to be more useful than one might at first glance have expected. We can, however, welcome an accurate chronology, supplementing that at the back of *Labor and Other Macabre Tales* in which most non-specialists have relied so far, some helpful suggestions for supplementary reading, and, in the main body of the book, some brief general studies of Lovecraft's fictions in the context of his life, clear surveys of his mythology and *Weltschmerz*, analyses of particular stories and poems, as well as a survey of the literary influences that helped to shape his work. Edmund Wilson's New Yorker article of 1944, reprinted in *Classics and Commercialism*, is the only overtly hostile essay Joshi has chosen to include. Other contributors, however, do voice occasional misgivings about certain aspects of Lovecraft's writings and personality; and the composition of a team that includes T. O. Mabbott, D. W. Mosig, Paul Buhle, Barton L. St. Armand as well as Fritz Leiber and Robert Bloch is varied enough to obviate the charge of adherence to that uncritical Lovecraft cult which Wilson discussed as "even ... more infantile than ... the Baker Street Irregulars and the cult of Sherlock Holmes".

The first task we have to per-



Not exotic wallflowers, but acrylic "Sugar Plum Fairies", these sinister women leer out of Robert Kushner's "mixed media" painting to be auctioned at a sale of Contemporary Art at Christie's, 8 King Street, London SW1 on June 30.

form, before we can adequately appreciate Lovecraft's work, is to scrape off the accretions that cling to it. Only a single book by this author was published in his own lifetime, and the bulk of his stories appeared in pulp-magazines not usually read by the culturally sophisticated. It was therefore left to his disciple August Derleth to put together the volumes in which most of us encounter Lovecraft's work nowadays. But Derleth was not content with the task of "collecting" and compiling; he wrote stories of his own, in what he thought his master's spirit, and appointed himself not only that master's literary executor but also the privileged expositor of his mythological system. In the process he not only distorted Lovecraft's mythology but also, it would seem, sent into the world Lovecraftian statements whose originals have never been found. One such statement is prominently quoted in a recent book on the literature of Terror, in which a dismissive account of Lovecraft is bolstered by an exposition of Derleth's "Lovecraftian" indistinguishable from that of his admirer British predecessors. "The blind coming grinds aimlessly on from nothing to something and from something back to nothing again, neither heeding nor knowing the wider or existence of minds that flicker for a second moment and then in the they survey their 'natural limits'."

ing, and, in the main body of the book, some brief general studies of Lovecraft's fictions in the context of his life, clear surveys of his mythology and *Weltschmerz*, analyses of particular stories and poems, as well as a survey of the literary influences that helped to shape his work. Edmund Wilson's New Yorker article of 1944, reprinted in *Classics and Commercialism*, is the only overtly hostile essay Joshi has chosen to include. Other contributors, however, do voice occasional misgivings about certain aspects of Lovecraft's writings and personality; and the composition of a team that includes T. O. Mabbott, D. W. Mosig, Paul Buhle, Barton L. St. Armand as well as Fritz Leiber and Robert Bloch is varied enough to obviate the charge of adherence to that uncritical Lovecraft cult which Wilson discussed as "even ... more infantile than ... the Baker Street Irregulars and the cult of Sherlock Holmes".

All this is not, of course, to deny the undoubted debt Lovecraft's work owes to Derleth, who founded the Arkham Press for its dissemination and introduced it to the wider readership it had failed to find during its author's brief and not very prosperous life. But then - one need not disregard the merits of Max Brod or belittle his signal services to Kafka's work if one seeks to rescue the import of that work from the disciple's narrow exegeses or puny fixity by removing the disciple's well-meant "improvements". It is time to dis- card Derleth's Chulhu Mythos, which gives disorienting prominence

darkness", we read in *The Silver Key*; and lest we discount this as the despairing thought of an invented narrator, Lovecraft declared in his own person and idiom, in a letter of 1929, that the cosmos "doesn't give a damn one way or the other about the special wants and ultimate welfare of mortals, reals, lice, dogs, men, horses, pterodactyls, trees, fungi, dodos, or other forms of biological energy".

For the congeries of imagined worlds with which man can make occasional horrifying as well as fascinating contact, Lovecraft devised a history, a cosmography, and a whole series of sentient trans- earthly beings and entities whose names human language seeks to render by such phonetic clusters as Yog-Sothoth, Azathoth, Nyarlathotep, Shub-Niggurath and Chulhu. Because of this en- vision of non-human entities fight- ing out their battles and conflicts

alluring and provocative abysses of unplumbed space and unguessed entity which press in on the known world from unknown infinities and in unknown relationships of time, space, matter, force, dimensionality, and consciousness" constitutes only one of five co-ordinates that may be discussed in his narrative uni- verse. At the opposite extreme, and in significant tension with the cosmos-centred view just described, is the delicate, precise evocation of New England settings in many of his tales - the streets, the buildings, the surrounding countryside, of his native Providence, of Boston, and of the imaginary town of Arkham which we may imagine not many miles away from either of these centres. Unlike Poe (with whom he had much in common, whose work he expounded sensitively and imaginatively, and whose manner he imitated in more than one tale), Lovecraft did not select European settings for his characters, he chose, rather, to follow the lead of Hawthorne's *Young Goodman Brown* and the *House of the Seven Gables*. "The heritage of American weirdness," he said of Hawthorne in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, "was his to a most intense degree, and he saw a dis- tinct throng of vague spectres be- hind the common phenomena of life ...". Lovecraft's "cosmic feel- ing", his experience of "the lure of unplumbed space, the terror of the encroaching outer void, and the struggle of the ego in transcend the known and established order of time, space, matter, force, geometry, and natural law in general" (writing to C. A. Smith, November 7, 1930) - these were firmly anchored in the topographic and architectural particulars of his beloved New England. In this he resembled the "epicure of the ter- rible" whom he placed at the centre of his frequently anthologized tale *The Picture in the House*: a character, who praises the New England backwoods as able to lead towards a "perfection of the hide- ous" which lures and fascinates as much as it frightens or repels.

We have now reached the third co-ordinate of Lovecraft's world, the point at which cosmic vision and a keen appreciation of one small corner of our earth come together. This is, of course, the mind of a particular kind of person whom Lovecraft chooses as nar- rator or protagonist of his tales. He is usually a scholar or a scien- tist (the narrator of *The Shadow out of Time* characteristically shan- donian political economy for non-Freudian psychology), who pursues knowledge beyond the bounds of the explored world and thus comes into contact and collision with forces that overwhelm and often destroy him.

If the mind of such narrators or protagonists, with its yearning to transcend ordinary space and time, with its "dreams of some Unknown Kadath", forms the third of our five co-ordinates, then the fourth is a place where this mind can find the food it craves and the wings it needs to transcend our everyday limitations. This place, of course, as Borges well knew, is a library. Libraries, the stored wisdom of the ages, there- fore play a vital part in the per- dition, and - occasionally - in the sal- vation, of Lovecraft's characters. They range from Boston Public Library to the imagined library of Mikaelson University, and thence to a vast library beyond known space and time whose treasures rob of the more fortunate of Lovecraft's narrators is allowed, not only to read, but also to consult in his own earthly handwriting. In these libraries may be found books that actually exist - the writings of Cotton Mather, for instance, which can summon up an atmosphere Lovecraft described as follows in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*.

The vast and gloomy virgin forests

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"Self-Portrait" - a pencil drawing by Arshile Gorky, c. 1929

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commentary

Across the trapeze

By Harold Hobson

Baronum
Loodon Palladium

There are several moments of real magic in *Barnum*, but they are not those which its reports from New York had led us to expect. It is true that Michael Crawford does walk the tight-rope, but he does not actually live on it, as enthusiastic visitors to New York have almost made us believe that Jim Dale does on Broadway. In fact in a show lasting a couple of hours he is on it for about only two minutes. But in the concluding moments of the entertainment he brings off a feat which in fact is told is not even attempted in New York.

The stage is ablaze with red-nosed clowns, acrobats, one-man bands, chorus girls, jugglers, tumbling bodies, and drum-majorettes spinning their glittering sticks. It is phantasmagoric; it is a vision of Luna Park; and it blinds one with explosions of colours so violent and aggressive that Duffy himself (even if he had wanted to) could hardly have civilised them. When to gain relief from the brilliance of the stage attack, one raises one's eyes to the distant roof of the huge theatre, to one's amazement one sees a man standing on a small platform in the very highest nook, with nothing but a terrifying abyss of space between him and the heads of the audience a vast, dizzying distance below him. This lovely, pinnacled, awfully endangered figure is Michael Crawford. Almost before you have had time to do more than catch your breath in alarm for his

safety he glides down a rope from the Palladium rafters to the tumult of the stage, darting before our eyes with the grace, the ease and the smoothness of a swallow. It is breath-taking, and in its elegant curve of movement very beautiful.

That Crawford can move exceedingly fast, and in strange directions, one has known ever since the wonderful and revelatory first night of *No Sex Please—We're British*. But he can also stand still, significantly still, and as every actor knows this is a very difficult thing. In *Barnum* at one point Crawford does it to enormous effect. Jenny Lind (Sarah Payne) is singing, and singing very well, for an audition, and Crawford stands in a stage box, one hand poised lightly on the box edge. During the whole song that hand never moves, not even quivers. With a smile of quiet enjoyment on his face, he stands absolutely still. His lips are slightly parted, and they never move either. And yet his figure does not look like a statue; it is vibrant with life, with joy, with discovery. This is a moment which is instructive to all aspiring young actors, and spellbinding to an audience.

The book, by Mark Bramble, tells the story of Barnum's showman and political life with the speed of a Concorde suddenly seized with literary ambitions. It is based on a foundation of unusual seriousness for a musical, namely the idea that a man and a woman, of equally strong characters, can live together not only in happiness but in perfect love. Mr and Mrs Barnum were exact opposites of each other. She loved quiet, and the rent paid regularly at the end of the month.

Her ideal was the small white porch, the tiny piazza and the trim, small garden. But in Barnum himself raged a fiery desire for recognition and applause.

The contrast between them is expressed very touching in a song called "The Colours of My Life". Composed by Cy Coleman to a lyric by Michael Stewart, "The Colours of My Life" must be one of the best songs ever written for a musical. It is highly emotional; its music is as haunting as that which drove Graham Greene's *Pinkie* out into the Brighton rain and cold because it accused all the viciousness in his evil nature; the rhymes are neat and pleasing; and the colours which Mr and Mrs Barnum loved—the quiet ooze, the blue that flame and burn—are a perfect metaphor for the difference between their natures. But although they sing of opposites they do not sing of opposition.

This lyric is, of course, nostalgic. It has the magic which Melville Gideon used to shed around him as he murmured his sentimental songs to the moonlight by his lazy, gentle piano. It has the poignancy of all lost and irrecoverable things, from Dante's rare glimpse of Beatrice to that last drive of the first Mrs Hardy a week before her unexpected death, which Hardy fruitlessly strove to recall. Its great aid, in the atmosphere of the time, brave attempt to show a kind of love which our stage has now as completely forgotten as it has forgotten how to understand Galsworthy's grief woe, in *The Skin Game*, he found that gentility couldn't stand fire, should not go without praise; neither should the tact and the shy, deep gaiety with which Crawford and Deborah Grant sing it.

Surrounded with fire

By Henry Gifford

The last day of the Cambridge Poetry Festival was devoted to a conference on Osip Mandelstam (who would have been ninety in January of this year). An anthology of tributes in verse by other poets, with translations where necessary (available from Los Poetry Press, 51a Argyle St, Cambridge at £2.50) had been specially prepared for the event by Richard Burns and George Gombri. Among the poets were Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, Paul Celan, Tomas Venclova, Seamus Heaney and Geoffrey Hill, and the translators included Max Hayward, Michael Hamburger, D.M. Thomas and Elaine Feinstein.

Clarence Brown opened the proceedings with a general and entertaining lecture on Mandelstam's last publication, the prose work *Journey to Armenia*, which appeared in 1933. This he rightly claimed to be "as beautiful as poetry". He showed deftly what these reflections on French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painting—"the morality of vision"—and on the doctrine of Lamerck as a defence of "freedom, individuality and self-determination" could mean to "an audience listening with aubersive ears". At one point he quoted Dostoevsky's demand to Cocteau, "Etonne-moi", and later acted on it by extravagantly praising Bruce Chatwin's *In Patagonia*. Chatwin avowedly had been much impressed by the *Journey*, but it was not easy to accept that he had gone to Patagonia with much of the eyes and intellect of Mandelstam. The evidence was not convincing. A conceit like "lulling the borscht into the ivory orb of his head" is wholly frigid—the mark of a Cleveland or off-colour Cowley, rather than Donne.

Yet the point was well made that Mandelstam's fermenting mind today, and that his trust translators are those who continue his work. Such a genuine heir of Mandelstam's spirit is Joseph Brodsky, who dominated the ensuing debate on the translation of poetry. He was joined in discussion by David McDuff, Bernard Mearns, and—virtually the first to this field—Peter Russell. Some quarters of a century ago Russell went to a tea-party with some shipping magnates. A foreign lady spied that he was a literary man, and asked about his current reading, which turned out to be Ovid's *Tristia*. "Ah, *Tristia*," she intoned, and then recited the whole of Mandelstam's poem by that name which forms the centrepiece of his 1922 collection. Russell knew not a word of Russian. He gave the next three days and nights to the study of the language, and on the fourth day he translated the poem.

Brodsky's performance was masterly. He at once picked out from the three poems under scrutiny the one that is the matrix of the "wolf" cycle, written in 1931 ("On to my shoulders hurls itself the wolfhound age"). What followed was magnificent as Brodsky felt the poem with "seeing fingers" and through it related two languages, two systems of prosody, and two cultures. Half way through, some of the audience became restive, and as chairman I weakly allowed an experience not unlike over-hearing Coleridge to be exchanged for what amounted to a talk-in. Some interesting things were said; but many of the audience felt cheated. To hear the first among living Russian poets, discourse so subtly about his great predecessor, ought not to have been sacrificed, even though participation is the cry of the hour.

The afternoon began with a film by Frank Diamond *The Years Surround Me With Fire*. The first part, on Mandelstam's life, was understated, mostly the familiar film acquisition of Russia before and after the Revolution, but then came the unique record (rather poorly shot, under difficulties) of a Soviet interview with Nadezhda Mandelstam. She was 73 at the time; it

took place on May 1—the anniversary of Osip's final arrest and site of their first meeting. She hoped it would shock the world to hear from an old lady that their marriage had been deeply passionate—"the nights were good, the days were difficult", because both had insupportable characters; he was "strong-willed", she "light-headed". When asked for her highest memory of Mandelstam she said all were happy. This moving testimony merged with snatches of Andrey Bely's avsky talking of Mandelstam's significance as a guardian of culture for those living amid horror and destruction.

There followed *The Buzz of Bark*, a programme of readings devised by James Greene from *Hope Against Hope* and *Hope Abandoned*, with his own sensitive renderings of the poems. It is always a high risk to call upon actors to read poetry. For Mandelstam, the activity was analogous to conducting music. But the music should not be Wagner's. Barbara Leigh Hunt and Richard Paus, under the direction of Ian Cotterell, very reasonably clear of declamation, and passion certainly did not sleep.

A final discussion on Mandelstam's life and work led by Sidney Monas and Donald Rayfield made some admirable further points. Monas, who spoke with an impressively quiet justice, reminded his hearers that Mandelstam is "the most sought-after poet of the twentieth century", and showed how his belief in hierarchy coexisted with his loyalty to the "fourth estate". Rayfield offered some challenging ideas about Mandelstam's interest in science—there are "black holes" in the firmament of his *Verses on the Unknown Soldier*—and about the effects of his sojourn in the Caucasus upon the texture of his poetry. The Mandelstam was driven to seek out these resources, could be argued, be seen as an unintended benefit of Stalinist aggression. The scientist still had some freedom; and the Caucasus replaced Western Europe as an imaginative value.

The last event was a reading from the poems by Bernard Mearns and David McDuff in English, and by Brodsky in Russian. To hear Brodsky read Russian poetry is as memorable as to hear him discuss it. His goes full tilt at a poem, in a rapid chant that abolishes all gaps between stanzas. He rarely glanced down at the text, knowing the poetry by heart. The recital ended with the work that forms the heart of the Third (and last) Voronezh Notebook: the *Verses on the Unknown Soldier*. Nadezhda Mandelstam had taught it in the film as one of the two poems she most cherished.

By this time many of the audience must have felt that Mandelstam and well be the supreme poet of this age into which, after almost fifty years, we are still locked. One would like to believe that Tuesday June 9, 1981 was significant day for English poetry.

The Writers' Guild of Great Britain and the Society of Authors have just announced that they have agreed upon an ambitious draft. John Minton, an ambitious draft, which they want to publish in 1982. It has been produced in an effort to standardise terms and protect authors, and is the result of a recent survey of publishers which found considerable variations in the contracts offered. It is hoped that current discussions will result in a final agreement which will protect the rights of authors in many areas including delivery, acceptance of typescript, changes in typescript, rejection by publishers, commissioning material, royalties, responsibility for errors, the author's right to approve a final edition of review copies, advances and royalties and other matters connected with the publication of books.

Not least, the Guild is also a new contract for a new popular market for religious drama. Its reflection on the day in part with a

'Monty'

Sir, Michael Carver's very comprehensive review of my *Monty: The Making of a General 1887-1942* (June 12) began with a series of strange errors which I'd like to correct before they gain any currency.

First, the agreement made between Monty and my father in 1962 took place five years before the Thomson Organisation's acquisition of *The Times*. Field Marshal Carver's mention of *The Times* is therefore a non sequitur.

Second, Monty did not make over his Private Papers in return for an annuity—something he was already receiving in return for exclusive writing for *The Sunday Times*.

Third, my father never served to 8th Army.

Why did Field Marshal Carver bring in all this misinformation at the beginning of an otherwise first-rate review of my book? To help prove a bizarre theory of conspiracy from Valhalla? I met Lord Carver several times, and he very kindly read the MS of my *Alamein* memoir. He is a forthright man and he recently accused me of hagiography then (quite rightly, since I consider Brooke, Slim and Monty to be the three British military "saints" of the last war), but he never mentioned his conspiracy theory. "It's a new one on me" as Monty would have said.

Ne, may I treasure Lord Carver and read the *TLS* that there was no "master plan" behind Monty's secret side of his Papers. The point was simply that Monty had already written his "Memoirs" in 1958; having used his papers for that book he saw no sense in keeping them, so like Field Marshal Alexander he asked my father to take them on, in order to raise capital, and in the sure knowledge that my father, as Director of a large organization, a distinguished Editor of *The Sunday Times*, and a decorated soldier, would see that they were not misused. Is this so difficult to understand?

NIGEL HAMILTON,

Heveningham House, Heveningham, Norfolk, NR18 8JH.

Bishop Bell and Religious Drama

Sir, Having read E. Martin Browne and Jennifer Brown's *Two in One* a few weeks before seeing the review in the *TLS* (May 22), I was particularly interested in C.H. Sisson's comments. To much of his article my bosom returned an echo, but I feel he has been harsh on George Bell when he writes: "The most widely diffused conception of religion was that it was a matter of individual conscience. It is doubtful whether George Bell reflected profoundly on these matters, or even on the fact that when the mystery plays were performed they were the most appealing form of entertainment with which the people could be reached."

It had been precisely to challenge the prevailing attitude of personal piety in religion that Fr. A. G. Hebert, SSM had written *Religion and Society* which Eliot published in 1931. It is true that Bishop Bell, in 1935, Eliot's book, would usually read such a book, but he would not read it in the way that Hebert intended. Those who would provide religion for the people should read this book. Those who would read this book should read it in the way that Hebert intended. Those who would read this book should read it in the way that Hebert intended.

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Not least, the Guild is also a new contract for a new popular market for religious drama. Its reflection on the day in part with a

theology of Creation whereby an artist may make an offering of his skills to God as a legitimate aspect of worship. (The idea is found also in the later choruses from *The Rock*). Also, the reverent acting of religious themes was to help deepen and illuminate people's faith, and to appeal to younger persons who had become disillusioned with the church's traditional services and ways of speaking.

Certainly, as C.H. Sisson analyses, it was unlikely that a revival of religious drama in the 1930s could take so deep a root as the mystery plays had done, for in the 1930s there was "the lack of any widely and profoundly shared view of what the Christian religion was about". Certainly, too, Eliot realized the difficulty but he hoped for a time when dramatic and audience could again find common Christian assumptions: "... we may perhaps come to a time, in which a play as fundamentally Christian and Catholic as *Polyeucte* may be written and may be performed successfully to audiences which will not be consciously attending a 'religious play', because they will be imbued with the Christian and Catholic way of feeling, even when they ask only in be entertained." (*Religious Drama and the Church*, 1934).

Eliot was not alone in the 1930s in wishing to challenge nominally Christian Britain out of its complacency and to match the commitments of Nazism and Communism with the commitment of Christianity. His broadcasts and lectures on social issues, and even *The Rock*, call on Christians to examine their own assumptions. The Munich appeasement provoked *The Idea of a Christian Society* and Eliot with a sense of each individual's involvement in a corporate sin within society.

Murder in the Cathedral is not adequately described in C.H. Sisson's phrase as one of Eliot's "revelations of sainthood and martyrdom". The plays as much about the Woe of Canterbury as it is about the Martyr. It is an exploration in terms of poetic drama of the pattern of the redemption of society awakened to its communal involvement in sin and the cleansing of this by the sacrifice of a figurehead. In this way it is a drama related to the pattern of *Liturgy* and the Mass. If we want to inquire what Eliot meant by the liturgical end of the line at which one form of drama may occur, then it is, I suggest, here that we should set to work.

G. E. EVANS,

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Ernest Bramah

Sir, — Bernard Levin, writes Patricia Highsmith in your issue of June 5, "confessed in *The Times* not so long ago that he had not discovered the Kai Lung stories of Ernest Bramah...". Since the entire point of the article is to refer to the fact that I had discovered the stories in my childhood and have been reading them ever since, this seems a bit much less so if "not discovered" was a misprint for "now discovered".

BERNARD LEVIN,
10 Devonshire Place, London, W1N 1PB.

'The Officina Bodoni'

Sir, — In his generous review of Giovanni Mardersteig's *The Officina Bodoni* (June 5), David McKitterick gives me undue credit in stating that the bibliography, which forms the core of the book, was compiled by me. No: so: a complete draft in German was still done by Mardersteig. This becomes clear, it seems to me, from the preface to this section, which appears over his initials. For the record this should be clarified.

HANS SCHMOLLER,
Steading, Dowo Place, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 3UG.

Tabloid English and American

Sir, — In his discussion of Tabloid English (May 22) Oxford University's general linguistics professor Roy Harris mentions the "attributive queue" which in America I have heard called the "heroic epithet". But I don't think he gets the diagnosis quite right. For one thing, this form was not originally tabloid; it seems to have been invented by that copious source of Trendy English (another TE) *The Magazine*; but its recent, rapid penetration of this country is a further sign of our sense of cultural inferiority in face of the linguistic deft *américain*.

The "heroic epithet" eclipses the distinction between types of attribution. The distinguishing mark, not mentioned by Professor Harris, is the elimination of the definite article, a part of speech not generally favoured by Americans. But conventional usage makes these distinctions quite comfortable by retaining the definite article. "Nathaniel Oxford CC's wicket-keeper batsman, Professor Rmy Harris" or if you prefer, "the linguistic expert, Professor Roy Harris" are expressions which tell us that he is not a thing by calling or interest, another thing by specific appointment. Similarly with, e.g., "theosom pedant, Professor J.R. Pole". The distinction is a fine one, and cases could be cited in which it can hardly be discerned. But it is worth trying to retain. And one can tell that the heroic epithet is a literary invention, and a bad one, because no one really looks like that. The people of the BBC who are so good at keeping us entertained during breakfast, and who seem to have been instructed to adopt this tasteless device, are audibly uncomfortable with it. The due to this is the slight pause that often occurs in their speech where the missing definite article belongs.

I suspect that the aim of this style is a general blurring of fine but significant distinctions in modern society and that the ease with which it has come in is a symptom of a subtle weakening of will.

Mr Windham dates Truman Capote's letter to us as August 1978. However, the only letter I received from Mr Capote was dated March 29, 1979, a message on a lined scrap of paper from the Palace Hotel, Madrid, denying he had said anything to Dorson Rader about Windham's book. Capote may have good reason for not wanting to be involved, especially if he can't see why he should bother to

It is significant that *The New Yorker*, whose editors care about style, has never yielded to this new vulgarity. Why should we?

J.R. POLE.

St Catherine's College, Oxford OX1 3UJ.

The 'London Magazine'

Sir, — Mr Donald Windham, having received a lengthy apology in *Open Court* as well as in the *London Magazine*, had his costs paid and been provided with eight pages in which to justify his action against us, now offers in your columns a gratuitous homily to the signatories of our Appeal Fund (April 10).

Mr Windham's main inference is that only as a last resort did he "make use of the legal means available to him for redress against unremitted libel", and that it was our failure to publish numerous letters of protest that drove him into taking action. The facts are that Darius Kuder's article was published in July 1978 and that we heard nothing at all from Mr Windham until March 15, 1979, when a writ was issued against us. The letters we received in support of Mr Windham, none of them argued in any sort of detail, all arrived either after a legal action had been started or so close to the time that it started that we could not possibly have published them. It is, therefore, incorrect for Mr Windham to imply that it was our reluctance to publish that led to his recourse to law.

Mr Windham dates Truman Capote's letter to us as August 1978. However, the only letter I received from Mr Capote was dated March 29, 1979, a message on a lined scrap of paper from the Palace Hotel, Madrid, denying he had said anything to Dorson Rader about Windham's book. Capote may have good reason for not wanting to be involved, especially if he can't see why he should bother to

contradict so harmless a quoted remark as "Tennessee is going to be *furiosus*". That Tennessee was furious is in fact: see the *New York Times*, January 15, 1978. Whether he was justified in being so and remaining so two years later, as a letter to me testifies, is a matter between him and Mr Windham. For suggesting incorrectly that Tennessee Williams had not given authority to Mr Windham to publish their private correspondence we properly apologized. That was partly what the case was about. The costs, however, were not mostly due, as Mr Windham alleges, to our reluctance to apologize, but to his unreasonably verbose requirements, necessitating protracted negotiations.

What remains puzzling, though, is why Mr Windham, ultimately so disinterested in damages, should have taken legal action in the first place. Writers customarily handle these matters themselves in the pages of literary magazines. I fail he wanted in to do so put the facts straight, a letter to the magazine at the time (July 1978) would have done the trick for more effectively than a writ issued nine months, and settled over two years, later.

ALAN ROSS.

London Magazine, 30 Thurloe Place, London SW7.

In John Keegan's review of David Wilkinson's *Deadly Quorrels* (June 5) the phrase "a twenty-four year cycle" (last sentence of the sixth paragraph) should have read "a twenty-four year cycle". In the penultimate paragraph of Zara Steiner's review of Catherine Ann Chene's *E. D. More* (also June 5) the fourth sentence should have read "The wings of the Foreign Office were clipped not by parliament, nor the people, but by the prime minister, the service departments and the Treasury," and in the same paragraph "The League" (fifth line from the bottom) should have been "The League of Nations Union". We apologize for these errors.

'Author, Author' is on page 702.

Among this week's contributors

JOHN BAYLY is Warton Professor of English at the University of Oxford. His *Shakespeare and Tragedy* will be reviewed shortly in the *TLS*.

RONALD BOTTALL's most recent collection of poems, *Reflections on the Nile*, was published in 1980.

C. N. L. BROOKE's books include *Studies in the Early British Church*, 1968, and *A History of York Minster*, 1977.

EDWARD BURNS is a lecturer in English at the University of Liverpool.

JOHN BUXTON's books include *Byron and Shelley: The History of a Friendship*, 1968, and *Note on the Garden at New College*, 1976.

HUMPHREY CARPENTER's biography of W.H. Auden will be reviewed shortly in the *TLS*.

MICHAEL CARRUTHERS is a Junior Research Fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford.

RICHARD COMBS is the editor of *Sight and Sound*.

VIOLET CONNOLLY's books include *Siberia Today and Tomorrow*, 1975.

PETER CONRAD's books include *Romantic Opera and Literary Form*, 1977, and *Imagining America*, 1980.

PATRICIA CRAIG's critical study, *The Lady Sales in Fiction*, a collaboration with Mary Cadogan, was published earlier this year.

ROBERT MCCABOY is Professor of History at Barnard College, Columbia University.

ROBERT BERNARD MARTIN's *Tennyson: the Unquiet Heart* has recently been awarded the Duff Cooper Memorial Prize and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize.

MICHAEL MASON is a lecturer in English at University College London.

J. MORRIS CHORR's *William Burges and the High Victorian Dream* will be published later this month.

F. W. DILLSTONE's books include *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, 1973, and *Religion and Art as Communication*, 1974.

TIM DOOLEY is the editor of the poetry review, *Green Lines*.

DERIN DUNCANSON is Reader in South-East Asian Studies at the University of Kent.

HENRY GIFFORD's books include *Tolstoy: a Critical Anthology*, 1971, and *Pasternak*, 1977.

BASIL GREENHILL is Director of the National Maritime Museum.

MARK HAWORTH-BOTHILL is Assistant Keeper of Photographs at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

RENÉE HAYNES's books include *The Seagull: the Setting*, 1976. She is working on a history of the Society for Psychical Research.

ROBERT HODGSON's *In Anger: Culture in the Cold War 1945-60* was published earlier this year.

HAROLD HOBSON is an Honorary Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford.

JOHN LUCAS is the editor of *The 1930s: a Challenge to Orthodoxy*, 1979. His *The Literature of Change* was published earlier this year.

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LES A. MURRAY's collections of poems include *Against Economics*, 1972, and *Selected Poems: The Vernacular Republic*, 1976.

ALAN NOVE is Professor of Economics at the University of Glasgow. His books include *Political Economy and Soviet Socialism*, 1979.

REMOND O'HANLON has recently completed a study of Joseph Conrad and Charles Darwin.

S. S. PAVOVA's books include *Comparative Literary Studies: An Introduction*, 1973, and *Culligan's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror*, 1980.

DAVID RIDGEWAY is a lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh. He is co-editor of *Italy Before the Romans*, 1979.

NESTA ROBERTS's books include *The Face of France*, 1976.

LEONARD SCHAPIRO's recent books include *Turgenev: His Life and Times*, 1979.

FRANCES SPALDING's biography of Roger Fry was published last year.

STUART SUTHERLAND is Professor of Experimental Psychology at the University of Sussex.

T. O. TREADWELL is a lecturer in English at the Southampton Institute of Higher Education.

W. L. WARREN's books include *King John*, 1961, and *Henry II*, 1973.

EDWIN WEBER's most recent book is *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 1978.

HUGH WILLIAMS's collection of poems include *Love Life*, 1980.

A. N. WILSON is the Literary Editor of *The Spectator*.

M. E. YAP's most recent book is *Strategies of British India: Iran and Afghanistan 1798 - 1850*, 1980.

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The Booze-Kitten's claws

By A. N. Wilson

PETER QUENNELL (Editor):

A Lonely Business
A Self-Portrait of James Pope-Hennessy
278pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£12.50.
0 297 77918 4

A Lonely Business comprises a random selection of the personal and literary remains of James Pope-Hennessy. It is undoubtedly - to say the least - edited by his old friend Peter Quennell, and it is not easy to see what principles of selection, if any, operated in his choice of material.

In quality, the letters and diaries and memoirs vary from the overcautiously trivial to the exquisitely funny. In subject-matter, the book divides itself into two parts: the first two hundred pages are the "self-portrait" of the sub-title; the final sixty pages or so are entitled "Royal Portraits". The latter part of the book makes much better reading than the earlier letters and diary entries. Consider this:

My darling Muriel and Paul, I cannot thank you enough for my new velvet suit! It is perfectly angelic of you, especially as (though I was pondering on getting another) I wasn't quite clear about whether I could afford it. The shop has stopped making blue or grey ones in my size; so I have bought a dark crimson one - "burgundy" I understand it is technically called. It is too beautiful for words. I'm almost overwhelmed by the socks - which will come in more than handy in an Edinburgh February. Fancy you are mutually the best friends in the world. But you know that? Much love from James.

A couple of years after writing this letter to Muriel and Paul Wallraf, Pope-Hennessy met a hideous end in his flat in Ladbroke Grove. "Reading his diaries, essays and letters, I have sometimes almost begun to forget that he died seven years ago, such is the vitality and gaiety and imaginative insight that still enlivens everything he wrote" is the opinion of the editor of this and volume. So, for reasons which are surely demonstrated by the letter just quoted, James Pope-Hennessy obviously was "the best friend in the world" not only to Muriel and Paul Wallraf and Mr. Quennell, but to countless others, who were only too happy to rally round and make sure that he was comfortably supplied with dinner, invitations, and - burgundy-coloured velvet suits. (One friend was even duped to buy him a parrot, but when the bird arrived, he found it was too much trouble to look after, and it was given away.) The friends doubtless admired Pope-Hennessy's conversation, his elegant prose manner and his skills as a biographer; and he presumably looked more appealing than the photographs of him. But the sad truth is, that seven years have passed and the gaiety which enlivens everything he wrote has started to curdle a little at the edges. His writings (*London, Fabric of a City*, *The Right of Youth*), admirable though they may be, are no longer read. He was never sufficiently famous for his private life to be a matter of public legend. One wonders about the propriety of publishing the letter about the velvet suit. As he emerges from such pieces of gaiety, he seems less attractive than he evidently was in life.

Quite irrationally, the reader starts to blame Pope-Hennessy for the minutiae of his obsessions. With all creation groaning and travelling, should a man be overwhelmed by a pair of socks? It is unfair, of course, because he did not himself ask for the letter - a thing of the moment in 1972 - to appear in print in 1981. But such minutiae can be interesting in the lives of the truly great, here they only add to the irritation which the volume will inevitably arouse. One begins to notice only his effete, silly tone of voice ("Write to dear little Ladbroke Grove - which is being repainted in lime-green and crimson for my return; or so I hope. All my love, my dear boy" and his mandarin distaste for doing anything. (On being made Literary Editor of the *Spectator*, a job which any self-

respecting young loafer ought to covet, he said it was "entirely against my will, but simply because I have to live; and because this is the best and least horrible way of doing a job".)

This poignant notion, that he had to live, was not of course shared by all his intimates, one of whom decided to murder him. But for the most part, his friends did see it as their duty to nip up his life for him, fetching him from airports, buying him parrots, arranging for him to make money, to be invited out and to travel. Some of the languid little jokes are almost good enough to reprint - "There is the most enchanting animal in this house, called a booze-kitten (not a booze-kitten, that's me)" - but for the most part it is sorry stuff. There is something depressing about the evident contrast between his charms in life and the ghastly impression given in the book of a series of unsalubly involvements combined with sybaritic doings on women, provided they were sufficiently rich, beautiful or grand. It is all too familiar a tale, the sort of tholag, as Churchill said of Tom Driberg, which gets sordidly o bad name.

But all is redeemed in the second half of *A Lonely Business*. James Pope-Hennessy wrote many brilliant books: his portrait of his grandfather's colonial life to *Verandah*, and his *Trolope*, whatever actually happens to them, certainly deserve to survive. But there is one book toweringly greater than anything else he wrote, and that is his life of Queen Mary. It is not so much that he had at last chosen a great subject, but that he had found a subject to which his pen was perfectly suited. He is much better when he isn't posing, and when the attention is focused on someone other than himself.

The final section of this book is devoted to the notes Pope-Hennessy made during the composition of that book. There are punctiliously malicious and amusing accounts of staying with the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, and of visiting Sandringham, Badminton, Geoffrey Fisher at Lambton

Palace and Queen Mary's continental relations abroad. Here the self-pitying velvet-clad old "booze-kitten" gives place to a brilliantly felino chronicler and observer. At Le Moulin des Tuilleries, he notices "every conceivable luxury and creature-comfort brought, called on, conscripted to produce a perfection of sybaritic living. It is, of course, intensely American. But I would think consciously aimed. The Queen Mother at Clarence House is leading a lodging-house existence compared to this". He notes, too, how there is a directory for the internal telephone system in the house "in which she is referred to as S. A. la Duchesse". She explains to him "with her best nice grin" that they had a pug called Peter Townsend, "but we gave the Group Captain away".

Then there are the conversations with the Duke of Windsor: "Off the record, since you've seen everything, I'd better tell you how things were, but not for the book. My father had a most horrible temper. He was foully rude to my mother. Why, I've even seen her leave the table because he was so rude to her, and we children would all follow her out... This, at last, is the stuff. It would be wonderful to have more. He does not reveal, for instance, when they all left George V to saw his way through a furious and solitary dinner, whether they remembered to bow."

Pope-Hennessy interviewing the Archbishop of Canterbury is almost equally entertaining, particularly since, as a Roman Catholic of that stamp and vintage, he crosses the portals of Lambeth Palace as though he were entering the headquarters of some strange conglomerate, part charitable institution, part state home. He records Geoffrey Cantuar's words without always (one suspects) catching their tone. "We believe that confession is a sacrament and brings grace", says the Archbishop, "think it has its sacramental aspect".

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It is deeply to be regretted, of course, that Pope-Hennessy died so early (he was only fifty-eight) and in such a way. It is also to be regretted that at that time he was writing a life of Noel Coward and mixing with a crowd in whom posterity will take no interest, or of whom it already knows too much. He should have been a sort of Duc de Saint-Simon of Sandringham and Badminton. He was not a selfist, and we do not in any case need satires of our Royal Family: it is obvious enough what is funny about them. But it would be good to have more closely observed, waspish but affectionate detail. In 1939, he had revealed in a letter from Trinidad to Clarissa Churchill that he wanted to write a book which was "a show-up of the spiritual nullity of our imperialism", thus revealing a rather tediously predictable impatience with "bungalows and villas, cards, morning-bridge parties, tennis, cocktail dances, electric fans, trim gardens and illiteracy". In *Queen Mary* he described a woman who believed in and loved all these things (except, perhaps, "cocktail dances") but was, he revealed, a truly great person. What would his pen not have done for the contemporary Royal Family? Frequent, in the earlier part of this volume, the Victorian judgment on Cleopatra ("How unlike the bones of our own dear Queen") comes to mind. It was because he was so unlike George V that Pope-Hennessy could view Sandringham with the detachment and sympathy that it deserved from his serious pen.

By Humphrey Carpenter

BERNARD SELLIN
The Life and Works of David Lindsay
Translated by Kenneth Gunnell
257pp. Cambridge University Press.
£17.50.
0 521 22768 2

To those who have the slightest inclination to giggle at fantasy and science fiction, *A Voyage to Archurus* must be an incomparable source of mirth. I had never met him before, but I knew him by his peculiarities of person. He was of a bright gamboge colour and possessed a very long, proboscis-like nose, which appeared to be a useful organ, but did not add to his beauty.

Yet this often banally written novel, published in 1920, exercised a very strong influence over C. S. Lewis's *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra*. Lewis virtually stole his plot and then split it up into these two books - and it deserves, quite apart from this, to be taken entirely seriously. The story is grotesque, Maekull, the sort-of-hero, spends most of his time while visiting the constellation of Archurus sprouting extra limbs on his body and murdering people with large rocks. But the author, David Lindsay, was trying to write not simply a fantasy in the Wells and Verne tradition but a metaphysical allegory, an examination of the nature of pleasure and pain. And he does not exactly fail. At its best, the book has a Blake-like power.

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0 521 22768 2

To those who have the slightest inclination to giggle at fantasy and science fiction, *A Voyage to Archurus* must be an incomparable source of mirth. I had never met him before, but I knew him by his peculiarities of person. He was of a bright gamboge colour and possessed a very long, proboscis-like nose, which appeared to be a useful organ, but did not add to his beauty.

Yet this often banally written novel, published in 1920, exercised a very strong influence over C. S. Lewis's *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra*. Lewis virtually stole his plot and then split it up into these two books - and it deserves, quite apart from this, to be taken entirely seriously. The story is grotesque, Maekull, the sort-of-hero, spends most of his time while visiting the constellation of Archurus sprouting extra limbs on his body and murdering people with large rocks. But the author, David Lindsay, was trying to write not simply a fantasy in the Wells and Verne tradition but a metaphysical allegory, an examination of the nature of pleasure and pain. And he does not exactly fail. At its best, the book has a Blake-like power.

Lindsay's admirers don't hesitate to call him "the style is hopelessly amateurish" remarks Colin Wilson who published a study of him eleven years ago and introduces this new volume. Bernard Sellin's book, originally written in French as a Sorbonne doctoral thesis, is equally blunt.

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RANDALL JARRELL
Kipling Auden & Co.
Essays and Reviews 1935-64
381pp. Carcanet New Press. £9.95.
0 85635 34 9

Robert Lowell famously remarked that "Eulogy was the glory" of Randall Jarrell's criticism and it is so. Yet he is equally remarkable for his way with absolutely telling quoadoo and with the remarks that precede or follow it. This means that his critical judgments feel unerring and final. And this is the more remarkable when you realize that most of his criticism is concerned with contemporary writing. You have only to think of the standard names of English literary criticism of this century - of, shall we say, F.R. Leavis, Kenneth Burke, T.S. Eliot, I.A. Richards, R.P. Blackmur, Yvor Winters, William Empson - to realize the comparatively small amount of time they gave to writing about their contemporaries. As a reviewer and literary journalist, Jarrell was constantly called upon to write about first books by unknown writers and new books by the famous. The wonder is how right he nearly always proved to be. It is almost impossible to catch him out. To be sure, there are individual statements with which we might want to quarrel, but they count for very little compared with the marvellous, swift and untroubled certainty of his critical judgments.

Jarrell was not bothered by reputations. When he reviewed E.E. Cummings's *Poems 1924-1954*, he said, among other things, "What I like least about Cummings's poems is their pride in Cummings and their contempt for most other people; the difference between the I and you of the poems, and other people, is the poems' favourite subject." We might all think that nowadays, but who else would have thought or dared to say it in 1954? And who else, a year later, would have said of Stephen Spender's *Collected Poems*:

When the muse first came to Mr Spender he looked so sincere that her heart failed her, and she said: "Ask anything and I will give it to you", and he said: "Make me sincere."

If you look at the world with parted lips and a pure heart, and will the good, won't that make a true and beautiful poem? One's heart tells one that it will; and one's heart is wrong.

There are countless other examples that one could give of the truthful clarity and wit that one loves and admires Jarrell for. It is impossible to imagine him being taken in by the "Age" or the "tawdry". In 1945 he reviewed a collection of *Five Young American Poets*, one of whom was Tennessee Williams, and about him, Jarrell wrote that Williams "must be one of those houses people make up to embarrass Poetry or Angry Penguins: no real person - no fictional one except Humphrey Dumpty - would say about poets: 'For others, I know, the Army has offered a bonus' (That heaven, Dachau)." Yet in the same review Jarrell remarked of Lowell's *Land of Unlikeness* that "Lowell is a promising poet. In this specific sense, some of the best poems of the past years ought to be written by him." And ten years later he wrote of Elizabeth Bishop that "the people of the future will read her just as they will read Dickinson or Whitman or Stevens."

Jarrell was not only invariably right, he was quite fearless. How else would he have dared to say of a collection of poems by William Carlos Williams that his limitations are neither technical nor moral but intellectual? Or remark of *Prose of the Age of Anxiety* that "The book, during the thirties, was one of the five or six best books to the world, and he probably turned into a rhetorical

Competition No 55
1 Give Dayrolles a chair.
2 This hath not-offended the king.
3 God bless you, my dear.

Arriving at acceptance

By John Lucas

mill grinding away at the bottom of Limbo, into an automaton that keeps making little jokes, little plays on words, little rhetorical engines, as compulsively and unendingly and unasily as a neurotic would his hands". Now one might, of course, argue that Jarrell said something very similar about Auden, or would have done if any of his contributors had possessed a shred of Jarrell's wit; but then no contributor to *Scrutiny* was capable of seeing and explaining why Auden had been one of the five or six best poets in the world, and none of them was able to speak with a proper generosity and understanding of *The Shield of Achilles*, where Jarrell could remark of Auden's technical mastery that "he is likely to feel, 'Well back to my greeting cards'." And how impossible it is to imagine the *Scrutinizers* - or anyone else, for that matter - saying of Wallace Stevens's *Collected Poems* that "One might as well find fault with so much wit and grace and intelligence..."

It is proper to bring in *Scrutiny* and the New Critics here because they did, after all, promise to survey the field of contemporary literature and pass judgment on what was fit for human consumption. In fact, they managed comparatively little in this respect and their few judgments have not worn well. Jarrell, on the other hand, did a great deal. He is a marvellous close critic, quite at home in the world of the New Criticism, as anyone who has read his analysis of Frost's "Home Burial" will agree. (I take it that Jarrell's championing of Frost was of great importance for that poet's reputation, not who but Jarrell could have wanted to preserve Frost from his admirers on the grounds that "they like his best poems almost as much as they like his worst.") In a typically mordant essay, "Poets, Critics and Readers", he remarked that "Unless you are one critic in a hundred thousand, the future will quote you only as an example of the normal error of the past, what everybody was foolish enough to believe then. Critics are discarded like calendars..."

It is true, they are. But not Jarrell. And this is not merely a matter of how well his judgments have worn. It also has to do with that extraordinary wit, which allowed him to tell the truth in the most unforgettable of ways, so that he could describe a book by Oscar Williams as giving the impression "of having been written on a typewriter by a typewriter," or suggest that "The people who live in a Golden Age usually go around complaining how yellow everything looks", or say of Matthew Arnold that, far from his age missing out on great literature, he "didn't know what he was having". Anyone who has read Jarrell will be in a position to supply his own dozen or so favourites. Often they come to the form of similes: for Jarrell was a master of the unexpected, truthful, simile. Who, having read it, can ever forget his remark about how a collection of critics would be unlikely to show any interest in Wordsworth's views of his own poetry? "In the same way, if a pig wandered up to you during a bacon judging contest, 'Go away, pig! What do you know about bacon?'"

A wonderful critic, then. And yet he has his limitations, his failings though it is to admit to the fact. What did Jarrell actually want of literature? When you ask this question, you find that you come up with a very odd, and in many ways, an answer: that he wanted it to be like or about "life". In poetry he has an account of Richard Wilbur's poem "The Death of a Poet", in which he says of the opening lines that "you slip to the shudder at the raw being of the world... that (and is real, all right. But when you read out, you think with a surge of irritation and dismay, so it was all only an excuse for some Poetry." Jarrell takes it

for granted that poetry should possess imitative form (no wonder he was so caustically witty about Yvor Winters). In a review of Roy Campbell's *Selected Poems* he says that "when I looked for the life in Campbell's poems all I could find was literature". There are many other such moments scattered through Jarrell's critical writing, and as is perhaps inevitable the word "life" seems vaguer the more you look at it, or try to understand what he might mean by it. (Much as it does, of course, in *Scrutiny*, where writers are regularly commended for being "on the side of life"; but "What is life?" as Shelley's poet cried.) Perhaps the nearest one can come to understanding what Jarrell had in mind is by way of his disappointing essay, "On Preparing to

Spinoza's granite-like pessimism; and yet reading Jarrell in bulk, his poetry as well as his criticism, you realize that he doesn't have the massive, assured calm of Spinoza. I don't doubt that Spinoza would have appealed to Jarrell, much as he appealed to Matthew Arnold; but in the end Jarrell is more like Arnold in that he accepts the eternal sadness of things, and too swiftly arrives at the position of a helpless, wry dismissiveness about his world; he assents to being a sad heart at the supremum. Indeed, there are occasions when Jarrell positively luxuriates in his melancholy, and this can infect even his best poems. The line between luxuriating and an energizing verve is a difficult one to draw but is vital; sometimes Jarrell falls on



Some of the grimmer elements in the childhood-haunted world of Randall Jarrell's poems are evoked in this 1967 drawing by Maurice Sendak, with whom Jarrell collaborated on more than one occasion. Illustrating Jarrell's poem "Children Selecting Books in a Library", and published in a memorial volume to Jarrell, the drawing in fact represents Maurice's brother Jack, taken from a family photograph. The open, however, is Sendak's invention - according to Selma G. Lane in *The Art of Maurice Sendak*, from which this picture is taken (278pp. £25, Bodley Head 0 370 30386 5).

Read Kipling". For there he quotes with absolute approval some words of William James's:

"The fantastic visions of horror are all drawn from the material of daily fact. Our civilization is founded on the shambles, and each individual existence goes out in a lonely stream of helplessness. If you protest, your friend, wait till you arrive there yourself!"

"A lonely stream of helplessness" is the phrase so Jarrell-like that it might almost have been written by him. In the same essay, trying to define what it was he thought Kipling lacked,

Death of the Ball-Turret Gunner", and a handful of others; but it may also help to explain why, in an otherwise unaccountable lapse, Jarrell found nothing of worth in the poetry of Isaac Rosenberg. For Rosenberg's best poetry has precisely that sardonic quality which would make Jarrell acutely uncomfortable. He would not be able to call it heartbreaking (one of his most over-used, and most revealing, terms of critical approval). By comparison he found it easy to praise Owen because his poetry "has shown to us one of those worlds which, after we have been shown it, we call the real world". And Owen's world is, of course, one of above all "pity", of the "eternal reciprocity of tears". It is guaranteed to appeal to Jarrell.

In a view moment in *A Room with a View* E.M. Forster describes Lucy Honeychurch playing the piano so that "the sadness of the incomplete" throbs through her phrases - "the sadness that is often felt but which should never be Art". There is that in Jarrell which is solidly in favour of the incomplete. Karl Shapiro was probably right when he said that "Jarrell is the one poet of my generation who made an art out of American speech as it is, who advanced beyond Frost in being not only a contemporary idiom, but the actual rhythm of our speech. Here Jarrell is unique and technically radical. No other poet of our time has embalmed the common dialogue of Americans with such mastery... He listened like a novelist...". This is true to the extent that Jarrell often uses the stumbling, cliché-strewn inadequacies of speech to convey important truths about the speakers of many of his poems. (It is notable that his warmest praise for W.C. Williams was reserved for Book One of *Poems*, and that he singled out for special mention the passage about the two girls gathering willow twigs, one of whom says to the other "ah! they beautiful". Jarrell comments, "How could words show better than these last three the touching half-success, half-failure of their language?"). The novelist in Jarrell is less importantly represented by the string-together jokes of *Pictures from an Institution* than by a large number of poetic monologues. But the trouble with these monologues is that although different people may speak, they all seem to be variations of one person, and that one person - who? It is in "The Woman at the Washington Zoo"

or "The Lost Children" - has a sad heart which isn't necessarily the fault of the supermarket so much as of, well, life. And it is that, every bit as much as Jarrell's lack of concision, of the canorous, which prevents him from being a major poet, though he is certainly a very fine minor one.

Several of the essays in the present collection were first published in *A Sad Heart of the Supermarket*, and the justification for re-printing them here is that that book is out of print. Why not re-print all of them? I imagine the answer is that the English and American editions are different, so that to include all the essays from both versions would take an unwarrantable amount of space. But this is to point to the fact that the state of Jarrell's published criticism is in the state of a muddle - as in the *Complete Poems* for that matter. I hope that someday someone will enlighten these muddles out: the whole of Jarrell ought to be made properly available. In the meantime, *Kipling, Auden and Co.* contains much of the best work of a critic who is essential reading for anyone that takes to heart the rhetorical questions he threw out to his fellow-critics: "Criticism does exist, doesn't it, for the sake of the plays and stories and poems it criticises?... Brothers, do we want to sound like the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, only worse?"

A recent addition to Twayne's "United States Authors" series is *Randall Jarrell*, by Sister Bernette Quinn OSF, edited by Warren French (172pp, Twayne Publishers: G.K. Hall & Co. 0 8057 7266 9). Following a full chronology and a verse-tribute to Jarrell by Jim Clark, there are seven chapters covering Jarrell's career as poet, novelist, critic and teacher: "An Introduction to Randall Jarrell", "Girls and Angels: The War Years", "Girls and Angels: Two Lyrics Compared", "Jarrell the Analyst: Poems on Art", "The Original Bat-Poet", "Novelist, Translator", and "In the Glass of Memory: The Greensboro Graduates Look Back" (this last a selection of reminiscences of Jarrell by his former students at the Women's College, University of North Carolina where he had been Associate Professor of English since 1947). The book presents a penetrating and sympathetic picture of a man who, apart from his achievements as a critic, was thought by Robert Lowell to have written some of the best lyric poems of the century.

Ordering the self

By Lachlan Mackinnon

ROBERT REIDER: *Wordsworth and the Beginnings of Modern Poetry*. 245pp. Croom Helm. £12.95. 0 85664 368 8

Robert Reider tells us that modern poetry sets out to explore the unconscious, that in doing so it follows Wordsworth's lead; and that Wordsworth brings back to English poetry a poetic self-consciousness which had been missing in the years since Milton. He points out how Wordsworth is followed by later Romantic writers in his respect for Spenser, who is admired not only for his content but for the "dream world" which Keats and Tennyson, for instance, exploit. However, his real concern is with Wordsworth's novelty, not his traditionalism.

The *Prelude* is at the centre of his argument. He offers a useful close reading of the opening passage in which the poet toys with and rejects conventional narrative possibilities before settling on his own mind as subject. His reading broadens to consider the way in which Wordsworth's long sentences enact the self-undoing twist of consciousness, and suggests that this can be related to the long sentences in James and Joyce. He moves on to propose that Words-

worth's repeated classification of his own poems by type prefigures the arrangements of, for example, Baudelaire and Whitman. Ordering the work is a way of ordering the self, and this is the characteristic modern concern.

Reider's close analyses are acute and interesting. The thrust of his whole argument is not, as it might seem, to treat Wordsworth's syntactic procedures well, he does not look hard at the problem of diction. In his last chapter, he cites Pound, Valéry and Stevens as working under the Wordsworthian dispensation. Pound's Imagist prescriptions are only a new version of the *Lyric Ballad* purification, we are told; what is not considered is the intervening presence of Flaubert, and of a rather different kind of artistic self-consciousness to which Pound and Valéry are heirs. Wordsworth was uniquely preoccupied with poetic finery, his aim being to speak to his reader without literary intervention. From Keats to Stevens, from Baudelaire to James Merrill, modern poetry, however concerned with the subjects of the self-undoing *Prelude*, has paid a quite un-Wordsworthian attention to aesthetic effect. No one since Wordsworth has slipped back so readily into eighteenth-century fiction, or so trusted his own value powers. Reider's conventional generalizations about Wordsworth's place in literary history fail to catch the ambiguity of his achievement and the doubt which must arise about the persistence of his influence.

Parochial concerns

By C.N.L. Brooke

COLIN PLATT: *The Parish Churches of Medieval England*. 185pp. 138 illustrations. Secker and Warburg £15 (paperback, £5.95). 0436 37553 2

In this splendid and delightful book the old world which gave us the parish churches and the new in which we study and try to preserve them are skilfully united. Our parish churches have had an extraordinary and chequered life. Many a stone and worm-eaten bench end represents the generosity and dedication - or some other mixture of human motives - which made every generation of the Middle Ages restore, link with or rebuild; and often that extraordinary mixture of zeal and neglect which marks every generation of a church's history. Never was this more true than today, when we bring to their study and preservation dedicated skills of conservation, all the resources of a rich country (beware poor its politicians may pretend it is), new techniques of learning - historical, archaeological, art-historical, architectural historical, as Polonsky might have said - and yet we see all about us, amid many churches beautifully kept, many others spurned, neglected, crumbling, dying. The reformer of the sixteenth century, with his destructive zeal, the woodworm of the eighteenth often (though far from always) chewing undisturbed, the restorer of the nineteenth, who destroyed more historical evidence than any of his rivals in his anxiety to salvage the

past: all these would find much that was familiar if they could wander far enough among the thousands of medieval parish churches which have none the less survived.

In a similar way many of the great historians and antiquaries who have written their history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries - such as Francis Bond, Hamilton Thompson and G. G. Coulton - would find much that was familiar in this book. Colin Platt's scholarship is securely based on a long tradition to which he also brings the skills and insights of current research. His own contribution is of special value, since he combines the experience of the archaeologist and the historian, and is one of those scholars whose work makes traditional distinctions between the disciplines sound old-fashioned.

This is essentially a historical survey, in which the results of documentary research, recent archaeology and the techniques of the architectural historian are brought together; the historical narrative is enlivened with numerous examples, many of them illustrated by the also numerous illustrations. It is not a large book, and will be, one hopes, the more accessible to a wide circle of readers for that reason. It covers a long period of history, and one excellent feature is a chapter carrying the story past the Reformation to the end of the sixteenth century.

The book is therefore, unavoidably, very selective. In early chapters, the author shrewdly appraises the results of some of the recent enquiries into parochial origins, archaeological investigation of churches, and the history of church dedications; but he does not take time off to discuss the way in

which hard thought and tough work in these fields have changed our approach and perspective, and what he says is perhaps a little superficial. The effect of this is that the reader is made aware of how many parts of it are in ferment. The selection also sometimes seems to distort the perspective. Thus Platt's study of appropriation - the process whereby a large share of parochial income was taken away for the support of religious communities - follows a traditional, critical pattern and indeed shows the influence of Coulton's justly famous galaxy of examples in *Five Centuries of Religion*. This tends to hide uses of the process which may seem to a modern audience more obviously congenial: founders and benefactors of colleges used them, for example, as did the fourteenth-century bishop of Norwich who founded Trinity Hall and secured the foundation of Gonville Hall in Cambridge, a way of endowing the education of the clergy of their sees.

At the end of the book admirable notes draw attention to much of the most interesting literature on the subject; but there is no general reading list to remind us of the great classics of the past, or the vital works of reference. I have not found any mention either of Povsner or of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. As such, one asks greedily for more because life is so good: this is a first-rate book which scholars may ponder and all who care for our heritage enjoy. It is also an attractive book. The illustrations indeed suffer a little from a greyness which may disguise the fact that many are based on admirable photographs, and that they have been brilliantly chosen.

Prelatical procedures

By W. L. Warren

MARY G. CHENEY: *Roger, Bishop of Worcester 1164-1179*. 397pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £20. 0 19 821879 6

At the time of King Henry II's notorious and bitter quarrel with Archbishop Thomas Becket, the youngest of a distinguished bench of bishops was Roger, bishop of Worcester. He and the king were cousins; they were of much the same age, and had for a time been educated together in the household of Roger's father, the great Earl Robert of Gloucester, a bastard son of King Henry I. Bishop Roger was one of the few men who knew how to handle the tempestuous and domineering but great-hearted Henry II without incurring the royal wrath. The story he told their study day by day, which impeded the urgent task, as he saw it, of reforming the Church. It is a pointer to his attitude that he was openly, to the dismay of Becket's friends, criticized the archbishop for not offering to resign if the king would guarantee a proper degree of freedom to the Church. Bishop Roger, it seems, had a different set of priorities from Becket.

In some respects he had more in common with his cousin the king than with his archbishop. Both of them disdained pomp, gave no thought to personal dignity, and were indifferent to wealth; and both characteristically sought a better ordering of society through the rule of law. Bishop Roger played no part in Henry II's fashioning of the English common law, but he was a notable figure in the pioneering phase of developing a common law for the Church. It is this aspect of his career which has left most traces. In surviving records, and in the major theme of Mary Cheney's book. A third of this is documented: 85 acts of the bishop's issued mainly from monastic cartularies and for the most part concerned with the patronage of churches, and a calendar of 126 letters of Pope Alexander III commissioning him to act as a papal judge-delegate or dealing with aspects of cases in which he was involved.

In exile; and after the murder of the archbishop he was one of those who journeyed to Rome to intercede with the pope on the king's behalf. The late David Knowles regarded him as the most loyal and fearless of Becket's supporters but spoke of his conduct as somewhat "equivocal". Mary Cheney attributes it basically to a conflict of loyalties; but the evidence of her book strongly suggests that Bishop Roger was very much his own man, out of sympathy with both sides, and impatient of a quarrel which impeded the urgent task, as he saw it, of reforming the Church. It is a pointer to his attitude that he was openly, to the dismay of Becket's friends, criticized the archbishop for not offering to resign if the king would guarantee a proper degree of freedom to the Church. Bishop Roger, it seems, had a different set of priorities from Becket.

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Bishop Roger himself spoke out boldly against Henry II's attempts to browbeat and dominate the English clergy. Becket's friends regarded him as a natural ally, but were disappointed by the way he distanced himself from the warring factions. He made his own working from his diocese and remaining abroad for about five years, but significantly he did not join Becket

Much of this material is disjointed - more like a basketful of shards from an archaeological dig than historical evidence. Points of law and judicial procedure may be wrung from it, but human interest is, to say the least, elusive. The author's own words, "It is bleak and austere" study, and it must be questioned whether a biographical format is appropriate. Nevertheless there is much intellectual satisfaction to be derived from the persistence of the questions put to the material, and even more from the historical interest of the answers patiently won. We may better understand the popularity of appeals to Rome when we see the superiority of papal procedures to those of the local diocesan courts. In much the same way as the king's court triumphed over local courts; we may better understand why men such as Bishop Roger wished to leave the Church, even if it is unfortunates; and we may, with Mary Cheney's perceptive suggestions, penetrate the mystery of how canon law came to be formulated out of the raw material of papal letters to judges-delegate; a remarkable high proportion of which were addressed to English prelates.

Those who knew him spoke of Bishop Roger as "a great priest" and the most influential bishop of his day. Pope Alexander III described him as a luminary who had shined in the Church, even if it is unfortunates; and we may, with Mary Cheney's perceptive suggestions, penetrate the mystery of how canon law came to be formulated out of the raw material of papal letters to judges-delegate; a remarkable high proportion of which were addressed to English prelates.

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HELENE CARRERE D'ENCAUSSE: *Le Pouvoir Conquis: Gouvernements et Gouvernés en U.R.S.S.* 322pp. Paris: Flammarion. 2 08 064300 2

This is an absorbing book on many counts. The nature of political power and the relations of "governments and governed" in the Soviet Union is a subject of perennial interest in the West. It is investigated by Hélène Carrère d'Encausse with acute political perception and a wide knowledge of Soviet and non-Soviet sources. A single merit of her work is that it attempts a broader perspective of Soviet Party controls over religious, national and cultural life than can be expected from more specialist studies like T. H. Rigby's fine work on Communists' Party membership or Mervyn Matthews' on Party privilege. Though her views on some contentious issues may not find general agreement, her arguments are always well founded and nicely balanced, while her lively idiomatic French style often lends wings to complicated argument.

In her analysis of the Party's techniques of power and government, Mme Carrère d'Encausse is frustrated, like all those working in this field, by the secrecy obscuring Party decision-making and the lack of much essential documentation. But her work shows what can be made of this baffling situation by patient research and political nous, even if many problems must be left unsolved.

"Le pouvoir conquis" of the title stands for the alienation of popular power by the Communist Party, and originated in Lenin's determination that power should remain in the hands of the Bolsheviks after the 1917 Revolution, and not pass to the less controllable peasant masses. In this he was successful. However, Lenin's standards of Party austerity steadily deteriorated under Stalin. Differentiation of salaries for top Party Government officials set in; and in its wake a wide range of secret privileges, including access to scarce food and other consumer goods, better-class living accommodation and the so-called "sealed packets", containing monetary bonuses not listed in any Soviet income statistics - to that extent making nonsense of many Soviet estimates of income - became and remained the order of the day for the elites on the Nomenklatura lists.

After Stalin's reign of terror, there was much to be said for some of Khrushchev's original projects, and the "Time of Hope". But Mme Carrère d'Encausse tends to exaggerate his qualities both as Party leader and as a competent administrator. His extraordinary personal speech at the Twentieth Party Congress revealing Stalin's crimes she regards as "a fatal blow to the Soviet ideology and system". Theoretically this may be so, but in fact both remain as strongly entrenched as ever. Khrushchev tried to introduce more flexibility and liberal democracy into the Party regulations and the author is of the opinion that his idea of "the State of the whole people" could have led to a radical transformation of the Soviet political system if allowed to mature. But as Khrushchev never relinquished the principle of the Party's monopoly of political power, his changes could, not radically, have altered the system. His unpopularity grew in the Party ranks because of the instability produced by his constant moving about of cadres, of his lack of a stable base, and of his temporary biography, not letters or sermons, and only a handful of anecdotes in the chronicles, but by analysing the legal material so thoroughly, Mme Carrère d'Encausse has written a worthy memorial to a man who strove in a very practical way to set this world to rights.

Having lost his power base in the Central Committee, Khrushchev was ousted by the powerful influence in

the Presidium of Suslov, Kosygin and Brezhnev, who seem to have agreed to operate on a "collegial" basis, so as to put an end to the kind of personal power wielded by Khrushchev. As there are no published records of Presidium proceedings, it is not known how this decision was reached and whether it was unanimous or not. Agreement was certainly facilitated in the triumvirate by the fact that the elder brothers Suslov and Kosygin were not politically ambitious men and Brezhnev's political aspirations were not yet apparent. In the author's words they were rather "use apparente gaiselle", compared to the more colorful rivals of power in 1953: Khrushchev, Malenkov and Beria.

This collegial leadership had to resolve several "mini-crises" in order to establish itself. In the first place, Marshal Malinovsky, was striving for greater autonomy, and an awkwardness existed between the Party and Malinovsky until his death in 1967. He was replaced by the more amenable Marshal Grechko, and subsequently by Brezhnev's nominee Marshal Ustinov, a Party apparatchik and specialist in armaments but not a professional soldier.

The well-documented steps by which First Secretary Brezhnev reached his present position as "dirigeant suprême" of the Party and Government apparatus show him to be a deft but cautious mover of pieces on the Party chess-board. Senior colleagues who might have proved obstacles in his path have gradually lost their status in the hierarchy. Thus, the once influential N. V. Podgorny, with a Party power base in the Ukraine; was summarily removed from the Central Committee Secretariat and appointed to the then politically innocuous post of President of the Supreme Soviet. The cutting down of the younger Alexander N. Sholepov, with a "carrière fulgurante" behind him in the Party and Government hierarchies, was

even more ominous: he was a former head of the KGB, President of the Committee of Control of Party and State, a member of the Secretariat and a vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers. His Party-State Control Committee was first abolished, thus automatically depriving him of his seat in the Council of Ministers and shortly afterwards he was moved from the influential Secretariat to the politically impotent post of Chairman of the Central Council of Trade Unions.

Simultaneously with these displacements of former "strong men", Brezhnev was acquiring a number of prestigious new titles in the Soviet hierarchy. He was designated Secretary General of the Party (1966) with decisive authority over the appointments and expulsion of Party members and over Nomenklatura designations, Head of State (as Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet) in 1977, and Chairman of the Council of Defence USSR. In addition, Brezhnev assumed the title of Marshal of the Soviet Union in 1976, although his military service in the Second World War was not distinguished, while under his eegis high military ranks were bestowed on General Epishov, Head of the Political Direction of the Army, General Shchelokov, Minister of the Interior, and General Andropov, head of the KGB, all leading apparatchiki and not professional soldiers. Such arbitrary encroachment on cherished military traditions may well have irked the Army and it is significant that the Army was not represented at the ceremony when Brezhnev was presented with the insignia of Marshal of the Soviet Union nor when he received the Order of Victory.

Having analysed Brezhnev's position at the top of the pyramid, Mme Carrère d'Encausse maintains that his power derives from the confidence felt in him by his elderly peers in the Politburo-Secretariat leadership who are primarily interested in stability, and from his own undramatic conduct of affairs; it still rests in

fact on the original concept of "collectivity". As a footnote to this one might suggest that this concept has been so undermined by Brezhnev's discreet assumption of personal powers and egregious "cult of personality" that a rising leadership composed of more active younger men would today find the situation just as intolerable as the triumvirate did in 1964. Be which as it may, the enigma of Brezhnev's elusive personality remains and not surprisingly Mme Carrère d'Encausse has not tried to define it.

Behind the Party's "chief" stands the influential phalanx of Party organs: the CC, the Politburo and the Secretariat, which are the de facto government of the country. The secrecy surrounding this "closed circuit of power" inevitably focuses attention on what is known of their structure and composition. By 1976 Party membership had grown to fifteen million from 300,000 in 1918, and the Central Committee to 426 from twenty-three members over the same period. There has been a marked tendency to select CC members, favouring the older generation (83.4 per cent in 1976).

Functional representation, rather than individual qualities, is now regarded as the criterion for membership of the CC. It thus seems politically significant that Army representation had declined from 10 per cent (1961) to 7 per cent (1976), while that of the Police fell to 1.5. But the *apparatchiki* of the State and Party organizations (formed 70 per cent of the membership).

The low representation of workers and peasants (4.5 per cent) does not correspond to their importance either in the Soviet population or in the Party's base membership, and provides good grounds for the criticism that the élite body should be more accessible to the working classes. The national republics are also unequally represented both in regard to the number of

delegates and their hierarchical status, reflecting their political importance in the Union. The RSFSR heads the list in both respects, followed by the Ukraine and Kazakhstan. All these republics have the right to membership of the CC but some are full members with the right to vote, like Uzbekistan and Belorussia, while others are candidate members without voting rights.

Unequal representation notwithstanding, Madame Carrère d'Encausse concludes that the CC is "a genuinely collegial body" because it reflects "a certain equality of forces in the USSR, force of the apparatus, force of the regions or the republics". It does not now have the decisive influence on policy it had under Lenin, but it does have the responsibility of electing the two top decision-making bodies in the Soviet Union: the Politburo and the Secretariat. The Politburo is a relatively small body (consisting of fourteen full members with voting rights and nine candidates), presided over by the Secretary General; its membership is predominantly Russian, and *ex officio* contains leaders of the Party and Government hierarchies, some first secretaries of the national republics and other officials. In the author's view, the Politburo became more representative with the inclusion, under Brezhnev's leadership, of the Ministers of Defence, Foreign Affairs and the Head of the KGB. Undoubtedly this was a shrewd bid by the Secretary General for the continued loyalty of those ministers.

The ten-man Secretariat, the main administrative organ of the CC, wields enormous political influence through the variety and importance of its responsibilities; the direction of current affairs, and the selection of Party decisions, even if theoretically it is not a decision-making body on a par with the Politburo. These responsibilities are distributed among the members of the Secretariat; for example, M. A. Suslov controls the ideological work, and all are assisted by a numerous staff of *apparatchiki*. The "petrification" or rigidity of the Soviet government system is often ascribed to the advanced age of members of both the Politburo and the Secretariat (average age seventy and sixty-seven respectively in 1980). This gerontocracy is tenaciously clinging to power, but seems loath or unable to tackle many of the country's urgent difficulties, and unwilling to confront the problem of the succession. Waiting in the wings is a younger generation of Party members, totally different in outlook, and impatient with the immobility of the system that blocks its upward path. In default of a succession procedure, it is an open question how this issue will eventually be settled. In the main, Mme Carrère d'Encausse's comments on Brezhnev's disposal of "strong men", and the Politburo and the Secretariat, largely coincide with the revelations of a Soviet defector, Michael Voslensky, in his sensational *La Nomenklatura* (a coincidence? as there is no mention of Voslensky in her bibliography).

Considerable social and political significance must be given to the discrepancies found by Mme Carrère d'Encausse between the nature ("le rôle") of Soviet life and the premises of the "State of the entire people", proclaimed by the 1977 Constitution. The forms of popular participation in government, through universal suffrage, and the local Soviets, are penetrated by Party groups and are far from independent. Some twenty million activists, for example, were engaged in ensuring the massive turnout at the polls and the return of all the single candidates at the 1979 elections for the Supreme Soviet. Still, in spite of the attendant risks, many thousands of votes were registered against the official candidates for both chambers of the Supremes Soviet while other citizens tried to express their disagreement with the election procedure by donating the polls.

The tier of local Soviets elected throughout the country are more in

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Power to the powerful

By Violet Conolly

First Essay on Interest

Not usury, but interest. The cup slowed in mid-raise, the short whistle, hum, the little forwards shift, mark our intake of that non-physical breath

which the lungs mimic sharply, to cancel the gap in pressure left by our self vanishing into its own alert - A blink returns us to self, that intimate demagogue self-repairing as a bow-wave. What we have received is the ordinary mail of the otherworld, wholly common, not postmarked divine; no one refuses delivery, not even the eagle, bee face fixed at heavy Menece: I have juices to sort the relevant from the irrelevant, even her gaze may tilt left, askance, aloof, right, fixing a still unknown. Delaying huge flight.

Interest. Mild and inherent with fire as oxygen. It is a sporadic inhalation. We can live long days under its surface, breathing material air

then something catches, is itself. Intent and special silence. This is interest, that blinks our interests out and alone permits their survival, by relieving us of their gravity, for a timeless moment, that centres where it points, and points to centering, that centres us where it points, and reflects our centre. It is a form of love. The everyday shines through it and patches of time. But it does not mingle with these; it wakens only for each trace in them of the beloved.

And this breath of interest is non-rhythmic: it is human to obey, humane to be wary of rhythm as tainted by the rattle, as merching with the snare-drum. The season of interest is not fixed in the calendar cycle.

It pulls towards acute dimensions. Death is its intimate. When that Halland of cycles, the body, veers steeply downhill interest retreats from the fleet it comes to itself and fades, like breath, it becomes a vivid steady state that registers every grass-blade seen on the way, the long wanted grain in the steps, free insects flying it stonks aside from your panic, the wrecked dilynray! It behaves as if it were the part of you not dying.

Affinity of interest with extremity seems to disill to this polar dimness that suggests the beloved is not dead; but rather, what our death has hidden. Which may be this world.

Les A. Murray

We are told that an aim of these poems
 is to encourage hugging – “a vital and
 much neglected bridge between mind
 and body”. There is, however, a trite
 sawiness about Horder’s praise of
 his guru (“Can’t do without you, Baba”)
 and his need to cast into outer darkness
 the non-graduate, the guilty of “forever
 holding themselves back” is more than
 a little dubious:
 They will pay the price
 For never breaking down, ever.
 The coronary will suddenly strike
 From nowhere. Taking them to a place
 Where weeping is not only the rule of the day
 But where their hard hearts will still have to
 be broken down.
 (“Why Do They Never Cry?”)

For all Horder’s bold posturings,
 there is an insecurity about this book
 which reveals itself in the largely un-
 convincing which infects the poems on hugging.
 The insecurity spills over into the
 same-dropping blurb where, as if hav-
 ing God on his side were not quite
 enough, Horder enlists the support of
 many others, C. Day Lewis, Pablo
 Neruda, Pete Townshend and Princess
 Grace. In the final, futile cry for attention
 which makes this,

Clearing up after Mao

By Raymond Dawson

JOHN FRASER:
The Chinese
Portrait of a People
463pp. Collins. £7.95.
0 00 216817 0

DAVID BONAVIA:
The Chinese
A Portrait
290pp. Allen Lane. £7.95.
0 7139 1377 0

During his two-year stint in China John Fraser often heard the following story about Deng Xiaoping. When he was purged by Mao during the Cultural Revolution, the veteran communist leader had to return to his native village in Sichuan province, which he had not seen for decades. There the villagers were astonished to see this hard-bitten and resilient character reduced to tears, appalled that the place was so little changed despite nearly two decades of Communist rule.

Now after a further decade of non-progress Deng and his colleagues face the daunting task of clearing up after the Cultural Revolution and the Gang of Four. The major problems which are the legacy of Mao's declining years include the crisis in the educational system (which had been totally disrupted by the closure of universities and the imposition of non-academic admissions criteria when they re-opened), the failure to make any significant improvement in

the living standards of the peasants, the huge urban unemployment (which had never been officially admitted before 1979), and the slow pace of modernization owing to "redness" being given priority over "expertise". To point the direction for the future the slogan of today is the Four Modernizations—in agriculture, industry, science and technology, and defence. Politics is no longer in command.

These two books are both designed to describe the realities of life in China as she enters the penultimate decade of the twentieth century. Subject-matter is the same but approach and style are completely different. Fraser's previous career had been in theatre and dance criticism before he surprisingly got the plum job of resident correspondent in Peking for the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, which operates the longest-established Western newspaper bureau in the communist capital. David Bonavia is an old hand at this game, a fluent speaker of both Russian and Chinese, who had served for three years as *The Times* correspondent in Moscow before going to Peking in a similar capacity. Fraser's is an "I-was-there" book, Bonavia's a largely impersonal account. Fraser's style is gossipy, rambling and repetitious; Bonavia's for the most part cool, concise, and authoritative. Both sorrow at the sufferings of the Chinese people, but do not fail to give credit to the achievements of the regime where it is due.

Bonavia has sometimes seemed to take a rather jaundiced view of China, a not uncommon and not surprising reaction among those who

have suffered the frustrations of trying to practise journalism in places where the truth is a closely guarded secret. He has also talked much with refugees in Hong Kong, who are not inclined to dwell on the excellences of the communist regime. But now that the whole of China is a refuge from its own recent past and the full extent of the tragedy of Mao's last years is freely admitted by the Chinese as they try to purge themselves of this experience, Bonavia's account seems a very fair and balanced picture of China today, providing just enough historical background for the needs of the general reader who wants to understand the legacy which the present leadership has to cope with. It gains in authority from the fact that he has two invaluable points of comparison, his years in Moscow and his knowledge of Chinese history, which is enough to show him how much of the present is deeply rooted in the past. Occasionally he wants to quibble with his historical judgments. For example, no one who lived in China in the late 1950s would agree that well-posters "as a serious political institution date from 1966". But in general his book can be strongly recommended.

Fraser is a sharp and sensitive observer, who got a very great deal out of his two years in China. His book is valuable reading because its focal point is the period of four months in late 1978 and early 1979, when the lid was taken right off the melting-pot of China and Europeans who took the trouble to look could see right inside. Democracy Wall in the centre of Peking was being plas-

tered with posters criticizing Mao and much else besides. Tiananmen Square was thronged with crowds holding impromptu symposia on democracy, unofficial journals spread like a rash, foreigners and Chinese could easily visit each other in their homes, and the pent-up grievances came gushing forth.

Fraser was in the thick of all this. He even stuck up his own wall poster to advertise for the return of a ring which he thought he had lost in the vicinity. He gave his phone number, and was consequently bombarded with calls from Chinese wishing to practise their English. Later he found himself addressing a huge meeting to pass on information to the masses about what a fellow-journalist had heard in an interview with Deng. But this could not last. Democracy Wall was abolished; and when the clamp-down came it was even welcomed by those who were content to enjoy the post-Gang liberalization. They did not wish all the new cultural and political relaxations to be jeopardized by trouble-makers.

Both writers capture the paradoxical nature of this ever-fascinating country. Fraser, with his short-term experience, left China impatient because the barriers against free communication had come crashing down, failing to appreciate that contacts were much easier than they had been for many years. Bonavia, taking a longer view, ends on an optimistic note: China is a fundamentally stable society, and the new links with the West will help bring the much-needed improvements in living standards.

there is a chance to get a well-paid Party man; even where an element of courting takes place, crowded living conditions and perishing prudery deprive it of romance.

The elms behind Communist reforms are political. Delayed marriage is meant to stave off the Malthusian menace; but that particular Party line is thwarted because, there being no state pensions under socialism, would-be weds have to breed young to be able to retire soon enough to keep them by the time they are too old to work. On their wedding day, city brides leave home by bicycle or pedicab; but village brides often still go by gaudy

sedan chair—happily no longer those ill-omened contraptions, glorified packing-cases, in which, with crated dowry following behind, many a wretched girl in older times was battered away from view and joggled tearfully away from home on coolies' shoulders for miles and miles, on some auspicious but inclement day, to her death before arrival from heat stroke, frost-bite, or drowning at a ford in spate. Along with showy dowries—and bride prices ("cootack gifts")—the Party proscribes the feasting at the groom's home which used to be the essence of a wedding; it is wasteful in post-revolutionary hard times. In cities, a tea-party in a works canteen is indeed the only

wedding breakfast nowadays, yet in the country Bruegelian nobility lives on: if the resources of the lineage are henceforward identical with the commune's, why not charge the banquet up as tax-deductible expense—tastefully inviting the Party cadres too?

Dr Croll finds one key to the Marriage Law's success or failure in different places to the housing of town or village. That is a shrewd judgment, for all Mao's totalitarian haste to breed the New Socialist Man by a kind of Michurist socialist conditioning within his own lifetime, customs have changed at their own pace.

Having fun in Oudh

By M. E. Yapp

RICHARD B. BARNETT:
North India Between Empires
Awdh, the Mughals, and the British
1720-1801
276pp. University of California Press.
£15.
0 520 03787 1

Even today the faded city of Lucknow enjoys a reputation for courtly decadence, a pale, latter-day reflection of the days when it was the capital of the state of Oudh and early Victorians listened with disgusted fascination to stories of its luxury and debauchery. In the early years of the regime, numerous cases occurred of children under the Marriage Law against parental dictates but being turned away because the Party preferred not to antagonize the parents. Since then, extension of the "commune" to every social activity, though intended to substitute Party power for lineage power, over the means of production, by making "production teams" coincide with lineages and "production brigades" with villages, has had the contrary effect of investing with a new political authority the old social control of the lineage over marriage arrangements. Occasionally, the Party itself or the Youth League stands in loco parentis, ordering who shall wed whom, and in spite of the egalitarianism the "communes" are supposed to instil, the village girls who really do have a choice go for money and position wherever

Sociology of South-East Asia edited by P. J. Clancy (Sydney, 1979, £17.50, 19 580408 2) has been published as part of Oxford University Press's Oxford in Asia University Readings series. Intended as a basis for courses in South-East Asian sociology, it examines the results of recent sociological research under the headings "Dual Society", "Plural Societies", "Locally Structured Social Systems", and "Evolution".

The subject of Dr Barnett's book (which is based upon British and Persian sources) is the development of the state of Oudh during the eighteenth century, from its secession from the failing Mughal Empire through its life as a captive dependency, buffer state of the British East India Company, to the moment when Richard Wellesley annexed a large part of it in 1801.

Barnett employs two types of explanation to account for the fluctuating fortunes of Oudh and the British

uneasily. The first is the traditional model in which successes and failures are ascribed to the moral and other personal qualities of individuals, and the second is the fashionable model of political science.

In the traditional model the achievement of Oudh independence is seen as the coexistence of the abilities of Shuja al-Oudh and the subsequent decline as the result of mismanagement by Asaf al-Dawla, who, we are sternly informed, preferred drinking with his friends to attending to the routine chores of state business. Well, who wouldn't, one may ask. Duty, whether prescribed by Sharia, Shastras or secular ordinance, is all very fine in its place, but what was the point of being a prince if you could not have some fun? If Oudh stood for anything surely it was for the benign human sentiment; it had no Biblical electorate.

In the second type of explanation personalities are replaced by impersonal forces. Oudh is described as a representative of a species known as a regional political unit, an area defined by history, culture and geography, and one of the building-blocks of most Empires. Barnett tries to establish rules for the behaviour of such units, comparing Oudh with other political systems in India, and elsewhere. Its fortunes, he claims, were governed by the interplay of power blocks; its decline was the consequence of the rise of the East India Company; and its

Southwell's scholar

By F. W. Dillstone

FRANK H. WEST:
A Portrait of Bishop Russell Barry
104pp. Bramcote, Nottinghamshire.
Olive Beckett. £3.95.
0 905422 74 0

The first appendix to this short biography raises the crucial question: should Russell Barry have been a bishop? There has been a noticeable change to the Church of England during the past twenty years or so. Up to that time, appointment to episcopal rank seemed to denote the attainment of one of the highest offices in Church and State with the bonus and privileges attached to it. But there has been a growing conviction that in our changing world a bishop's work has become largely administrative, involving committees, voluminous correspondence and travelling, and consequently allowing too little time for reading and writing and pastoral counselling. Men therefore who wish to follow scholarly pursuits seem hesitant to accept episcopal office.

Between the wars there were two men in the Church of England who possessed brilliant minds, who had served with distinction in the First World War, and who wrote books relating the Christian faith to modern conditions with insight and erudition. One was Charles Raven at Cambridge, the other was Russell Barry at Oxford. Without question each hoped to become a

bishop. This distinction never came to the first, probably in large measure because of his pacifism. In the case of Barry it did not come quickly, and when it did, it was to a see which he would probably not have chosen. He remained in Southwell for twenty-two years, fulfilling the essential duties of his office with the help of able assistants. But he wanted to extend his influence beyond the boundaries of the diocese in a way which he had previously been able to do through his writing and lecturing and preaching.

Frank West loyally supported him as Archdeacon for fifteen years and written about his ability with affection, frankness and balanced judgment. He refers sympathetically to Barry's physical handicap: deafness inevitably made verbal communication with him difficult. The biography reveals also that Barry had a real pastoral concern and won the respect, often the affection, of his clergy. Yet it is abundantly clear that his greatest strengths lay in his ability to relate the Christian tradition to the extraordinary developments in social, political and international affairs which have come about since the outbreak of war in 1914.

It was his appointment to be vicar of the University Church in Oxford in 1927 which gave him his great opportunity. There were immense practical difficulties but he overcame them, making the Church a centre to which undergraduates flocked on Sunday evenings, and organizing the Mission to the University led by William Temple in 1931, a mission still remembered

fifty years later as one of the most remarkable events in the history of Christianity in Oxford. In that same year Barry's book *The Relevance of Christianity* appeared and this established his own reputation. Nothing that he wrote subsequently made quite the same impact.

Bishop West traces the stages of Barry's career, revealing him as a man of first-rate scholarship who also possessed an enormous fund of courage and dogged determination which showed itself in his exploits in both world wars as well as in his handling of practical situations in parish and diocese. When he finally retired to a residence in Westminster at the age of seventy-three he set about writing books and articles, publishing no less than eight books between 1964 and 1974. At the same time he was a regular contributor to *The Times* and to the *TLS* and a number of his articles for the former were published in book form. He dealt with theological themes in a lively and up-to-date fashion, relating them to what was going on in the world, to the very end of his life. The biography has two specially valuable chapters on Barry as a writer and on the content of his writings.

Whether Barry ever found quite the right position for himself after he left Oxford in 1933 is a matter open to debate. But that he was a man of fortitude and of a fine constructive mind is hardly to be doubted. His biography has given us an appealing portrait of one who strove to the end to set forth the Christian faith as relevant to the needs of the twentieth century.

A Buddhist's Bildung

By Michael Carrithers

Edited by Somaratne Balasooriya and others
Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula
280pp. Gordon Fraser. £20.
0 86092 030 5

Walpola Rahula's varied and by no means smooth life can be regarded as a formation or *Bildung*, the gradual accumulation of the moral and intellectual resources which are so plentifully attested to in his writings. His formal schooling ended when he was refused to be sent to his village school in the south of Sri Lanka. He was then ordained a novice in the Buddhist order and received a traditional monk's training in Sinhalese, Pali, Sanskrit, and Buddhism. This enlightenment did little to quell his spirit, however, for as a young monk he became a vigorous critic of customary Buddhist practice, an advocate of the national independence movement, and even a supporter of the trade union struggle in which he was briefly jailed. His bold and vivid English he learned only in his manhood. And in his academic training he continued to transcend his provincial origins: the Buddhist monk who matriculated at the University of Ceylon, at the University of Cambridge, he pursued his doctoral studies in London, and he later took his D. Phil. in Paris.

Walpola's later work took him to Paris, to France and to China. He was a keen student of the example of the Buddha, a religious young man from the provinces who grew into a respected figure at the heart of a cosmopolitan civilization. Perhaps the most substantial essays in these volumes are those which deal with the history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. The very dense "Conditioned Co-existence" and "Supreme Enlightenment" surveys the relationship, as found in a very large number of texts, between the central Buddhist concepts of the Noble Truths, the interdependence of "psycho-physical phenomena" and the collective "mentality". This will not soon be superseded. André Bareau and Roy Norman are characteristically au-

brief but dignified visits to contemporary Sri Lanka, the Abbey of Solemes, and Mount Koya in Japan, the reader is conducted masterfully through the ancient India, Tibet, and over the Central Asian caravan-trails to China to witness the growth of empires and the spread of Buddhist palmy days. From Nara Japan, the ultimate destination of this art form, he is then borne to a quickening but still solemn pace back through the Asian wastes to Syria, Byzantium, and the Latin West in a search for the origins of palmy days. Not even David Seyffert Ruess's authoritative treatment of "Almas and Vegetarianism in the History of Buddhism," limited as it is merely to the central and eastern portions of the Eurasian land-mass, can equal this, geographically speaking.

Nearly half the articles in this volume concern particular issues in Buddhist thought, a proportion which reflects the great contribution made by Rahula to Western understanding of it in his pellucid *What the Buddha Taught*. Issued in the treatment of "Buddhist doctrine of causation" is presented as Rahula's argument for the personal unity of Buddhist thought, and George D. Bond's essay on Theravada scholasticism explores one avenue by which Buddhists have sought to ensure the unity of their faith. A brief article on the source of error (*avijja* or misconception) as conceived in Buddhism arrives at a satisfyingly clear and acceptable interpretation, though by means other than those Rahula himself would have used. Only Karmalener's Bhutanese's polemic attempt to subsume Indian Vedanta under the "harmony among the religions" of essays, which otherwise rightly emphasize Buddhism's autonomy and pragmatism.

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ous and self-effacing, but contribute significantly to, respectively, our knowledge of the history of the biography of the Buddha himself and our discrimination of strata in the Buddhist canons. These are tributes to Rahula's historical sense. But it is Richard Gombrich, whose sociologically sensitive article is devoted to the development of the mythologies of the many past Buddhas, who reminds us of Rahula's humour and wit, and of his deep cheer by including as a sort of appendix an unorthodox but cheerful piece of Buddhist mythical invention, a religio-philosophical far-below.

Apart from Udaya Maitavachchi's biographical sketch of Rahula which is basically a list of honours, only E.F.C. Ludowyk's intimate and touching "Thinking of Rahula" mentions another aspect of the bonhomie of his pastorate: his passionate advocacy of a role for Buddhist monks as humanitarian counsellors and exemplars to those exercising power in Sri Lanka. While Jacques Marquet's excellent article on contemporary meditation centres in Sri Lanka is all in its use of personal journal entries to make impersonal points—surely to remember that one of Rahula's chief concerns must always have been meditation, *bhavana*, a word that could as easily be translated "formation" or *Bildung*.

Christianity, Society and Education, edited by Jobo Ferguson (214pp. SPCK, £5.95, 0 281 03787 6) marks this year's bicentenary of the founding of the first Sunday school by Robert Raikes with a collection of essays on the development of the Sunday school movement over the last two hundred years, the place of the child in the Church and the role of the Church in education. Divided into three parts dealing with Raikes and his Age, nineteenth-century developments and present policies, the volume contains contributions from both historians and educationists. It includes a description of the charity schools and the eighteenth-century background to Raikes's pioneering work by Ann Briggs, a portrait of Raikes by Frank Booth as well as discussions of more general issues, such as "Raikes and Reform", "The Sunday School in Nineteenth-Century Literature", "Education and Society", and "The Urban Industrial Mission".

Business as usual

By Nigel Cross

EUNICE H. TURNER (Editor):
The Diary of Charles Compton (1828-1884)
132pp. Arthur H. Stockwell, Elms Court, Ilfracombe. £5.25.
0 723 1405

Charles Compton was a devout Victorian, a family man who lived quietly in Woolwich where he worked as a minor civil servant in the Ordnance department of the War Office. The diary he kept for the year 1882 has survived; it is almost the diary of a nobody, though neither as pompous nor as funny as Pooter's. There was a moment when he might have been a somebody, having studied with Millais and Russett and exhibited at the Royal Academy, but the lure of the civil service pension (which he did not live to receive) proved too strong. The entry for April 12 reads:

Saw today in the newspaper the account of the death of my old friend and fellow student D. G. Rossetti at Birmingham aged 54. Curiously enough, though his name is so well known in art circles (not out of them) I have never seen any picture or work of his since student days, neither do I think have I ever read any of his poems. I remember him as a very brilliant clever student ... and now he is gone and the poet come up like a vision before me and I myself and all our band of students—so full of hope and life for the future and now what have we gained and what have we lost?

Nearly a century later Rossetti remains one of the more widely appreciated Victorian poets and artists; Charles Compton, despite the publication of this diary, was, is, and will remain utterly obscure.

Although obscure, Compton seems to be exactly representative of the middle-class middle-aged Victorian Englishman. He works quite hard at his job, but lacks ambition, having achieved relative comfort with relative ease. He displays the orthodox mental-ty of the clerical civil servant. When his routine work as a kind of quartermaster at the Woolwich dockyard is upset by the government's decision to send an expeditionary force to Egypt to quell the unruly nationalism of Arabi Pasha, his nerves are severely strained. "Mr Gladstone has asked for a vote of credit, and now of course, as it always is, just at the last moment every order is being pushed out and changed. There is a great deal of worry and anxiety, indeed last night I could not sleep above an hour all night through mental anxiety." A few weeks later he is surprised to find such energetic quartermastering quite invigorating; "hard work seems to eat me and drive away all the indigestion and dyspepsia".

After the inevitable defeat of the Pasha ("this wonderful battle—thank God for this great national victory after the living of so modest a life")

Tall ship story

By Basil Greenhill

RICHARD ENGLAND:
Schoonerman
293pp. Bodley Head. £8.95.
0 370 30377 6

The classic account of the life in and around home-trade merchant schooners in their later years is W. J. Slade's *Out of Appledore*, now in its fourth edition. Mr Slade came of a schooner-owning community and a family which had been deeply involved in what was a fading and small vessel management for several generations, and he wrote of the life and the business from the point of view of someone brought up to them. In contrast, Richard England's account is written from the point of view of a seafarer who was not himself part of the community operating the vessels in which he sailed. *Schoonerman* begins in the early 1920s, ten years after the last schooners were built, and when the trade was in rapid decline. As

mercy") it is back to "business as usual", a phrase that causes Compton to reflect "sometimes the even monotony of my life palls upon me but it is a cause to thank God that it is quiet and therefore happy." But such quietness continues to nag him. "I long for a little change. It makes me sad when I read what men have done under all disadvantageous circumstances I have done myself."

Reading about other lives in fact or fiction is, after churchgoing and lecturing in the YMCA, Compton's chief leisure activity. In the course of 1882 he reads about twenty novels and a similar number of biographies and histories. His favourite works of fiction are by popular women novelists; Mary Braddon, Ouida, Dinah Craik, Charlotte Yonge. He finds Mrs Craik's style "very interesting and beautiful"; Ouida writes "a very beautiful story"; after a reading of Mrs Gaskell's *Mary Barton* he asks "why must the poor suffer"; George Eliot he finds a little difficult, *Middlemarch* is "a wonderful fine story... but is sadly prolix and wants compression." He also reads fiction by Disraeli, Dickens, Collins, Cooper and Trollope. Trollope's *The Eustace Diamonds* prompts him to feel guilty about the whole business of novel-reading: "It is a bit of a waste of time reading these things, but the relaxation amuses me a little at times when my mind gets weary and tired." Samuel Smiles appears to be his favourite author and he earnestly reads *Enrichment*, Carlyle and Macaulay for self-improvement, and all our band of students—so full of hope and life for the future and now what have we gained and what have we lost?

His own domestic life is not without its drawbacks. His wife, whom he nearly always refers to as "my dear Englishman. He works quite hard at his job, but lacks ambition, having achieved relative comfort with relative ease. He displays the orthodox mental-ty of the clerical civil servant. When his routine work as a kind of quartermaster at the Woolwich dockyard is upset by the government's decision to send an expeditionary force to Egypt to quell the unruly nationalism of Arabi Pasha, his nerves are severely strained. "Mr Gladstone has asked for a vote of credit, and now of course, as it always is, just at the last moment every order is being pushed out and changed. There is a great deal of worry and anxiety, indeed last night I could not sleep above an hour all night through mental anxiety." A few weeks later he is surprised to find such energetic quartermastering quite invigorating; "hard work seems to eat me and drive away all the indigestion and dyspepsia".

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Schoonerman is very readable but two photographs (Plates 2 and 3) acknowledged to the Nautical Photo Agency, which ceased to exist fifteen years ago, should have been acknowledged to the National Maritime Museum which now holds the negatives.

This was the reminiscences of (the sailor and stage designer W. Graham Robertson which was first published in 1931, but now been reissued in paperback (314pp. Quercus, £4.50, 0 7043 3358 9) with an introduction by Sir John Chisholm. The book, which covers the period from the 1880s to 1919, contains a series of portraits of Robertson's friends among whom were Ellen Terry, Sarah Bernhardt, Henry Irving, Whistler, Wilde, William Morris, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and John Singer Sargent.

